

## 157th Air Refueling Wing members make a difference in Manta, Ecuador

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478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron Public Affairs



1st Lt. Emily Cole hands out Girl Scout cookies to residents of the Manta City Dump during a deployment to Manta, Ecuador in February.

(Photo courtesy of the 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron Public Affairs)

MANTA, Ecuador - Volunteers from the 157th Air Refueling Wing - from the New Hampshire Air National Guard at Pease, N.H. - recently donated 100 "compassion packages" containing much-needed supplies for residents of the Manta City Dump. These residents live near and spend their days at the landfill, sorting through trash alongside ravens and herds of pigs.

Even though the members of the 157th ARW were only assigned to the 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron here during the month of February, they arrived on station ready to make a difference for those who need it most.

Before departing for Manta, they solicited donations from friends, families and charities to create bags filled with items such as backpacks, personal hygiene items, bottled water, toys, school supplies and six cases of Girl Scout Cookies donated by Girl Scouts of America.

"This is the very first time the FOL (Forward Operating Location) has donated to the dump - and it is truly a tremendous response," said Ms. Pearl Jackson, director of the Por Amor Foundation, the local nonprofit organization that helps facilitate donations to the dump residents. "With just a half-hour walk to the dump, these people got more from us in one bag than they would have been able to earn in an entire workday," said Jackson.



Chief Master Sgt. Bruce Nicholson hands out Girl Scout cookies to residents of the Manta City Dump during a deployment to Manta, Ecuador in February.  
(Photo courtesy of the 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron Public Affairs)

According to Jackson, residents of the dump do not purchase personal hygiene items because they cannot afford them, as their sole income is from recycling materials they find at the dump. Additionally, it costs them \$80 to \$120 to purchase school supplies for their children.

"The supplies donated today will greatly help offset those costs," she said.

"It was a huge effort on the part of the 157th," said Master Sgt. John McCassin, first sergeant. "Everybody put together their compassion packages. It's a great way to show the Ecuadorian people that America really cares. All they have to do is ask and we'll be happy to provide help."